



# NEWS BULLETIN

## SUFFOLK COUNTY DEPARTMENT of CIVIL SERVICE OFFICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

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April 2012

**For Your Information** from...Suffolk County Department of Health Services

Dr. James L. Tomarken, MD, MSW, MPH, MBA, FRCPC, FACP, Commissioner

### APRIL IS NATIONAL DONATE LIFE MONTH

**Do You Know? 90% of Americans support organ donation, but only 30% understand how to become a donor.** That is why *Donate Life America* and organ donation advocates have devoted the entire month of April to donor awareness. National Donate Life Month (NDLM) was instituted by Donate Life America and its partnering organizations in 2003 with the support of then Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS), Tommy Thompson. The month long celebration honors the generosity of organ, eye and tissue donors and their families and commemorates all transplant recipients in the United States.

*"The need for organs and tissue is vastly greater than the number available for transplantation," said Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone. "We need to spread the word that organ donation changes lives every day, but it only happens because someone like you made the decision to donate."*

#### LEARN the FACTS

Despite continuing efforts at public education, misconceptions and inaccuracies about donation persist. Here are some facts from Donate Life America to help you better understand organ, eye and tissue donation:

**Fact:** Anyone can be a potential donor regardless of age, race or medical history.

**Fact:** All major religions in the United States support organ, eye and tissue donation and see it as the final act of love and generosity toward others.

**Fact:** If you are sick and injured and admitted to the hospital, the number one priority is to save your life. Organ, eye and tissue donation can only be considered after you are deceased.

**Fact:** When you are on the waiting list for an organ, what really counts is the severity of your illness, time spent waiting, blood type and other important medical information, not your financial or celebrity status.

**Fact:** An open casket funeral is possible for organ, eye and tissue donors. Through the entire donation process the body is treated with care, respect and dignity.

**Fact:** There is no cost to the donor or their family for organ or tissue donation.

In the words of Donate Life America, ***"You have the power to donate life."*** The Donate Life America site walks you through the simple steps of becoming an organ donor. Visit their Commit to Donation page <http://donatelife.net/register-now/> to get started, and browse the entire site <http://donatelife.net/> to learn more about what it means to become an organ donor.

#### STATISTICS

**113,115 Patients on  
Waiting List** (as of March  
2012)

**28,535 Organ  
Transplants Performed  
in 2011**

**14,144 Organ Donors in  
2011**

